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ART. IV. — *Diary of the American Revolution, from Newspapers and original Documents.* By FRANK MOORE. New York : Charles Scribner. London : Sampson Low, Son, & Co. 1860. 2 vols. 8vo.

“DON’T talk to me about history,” cried the disappointed Walpole, “for I know that to be false.” Yet history continues to be written, read, and studied ; and is more elaborately written, more eagerly read, and more thoughtfully studied, in this restless, progressive age of ours than it ever was before. Social science goes to it for her facts ; philosophy invokes its aid to confirm and illustrate her principles ; poets draw from it their most touching images and noblest inspirations ; and the common voice of mankind bears unconscious witness to its power in the daily exclamation, — “Truth is stranger than fiction.” The men of our own times, like the men who have gone before us, reason and act as if history were true ; discuss the questions of to-day by the same principles that they apply to the past ; and, guided by the same laws of evidence by which they judge a Cæsar or a Napoleon, a Plassey or a Waterloo, stretch forth an unshrinking hand to the goods, the liberty, and even the life of their fellow-man.

When Reid undertook to reclaim for the human mind its birthright of belief, he appealed to common sense and the common reason of mankind, thus beginning that great movement which has restored philosophy to her true place, as the exponent and legislatrix of human knowledge. We may safely apply the same principle to history ; and, instead of descending to a subtle investigation of contradictions, may calmly remind the sceptic, that, if he would live in harmony with his own teachings, he must close the halls of justice and the temples of the Christian’s God, which found, like history, their claims to our confidence and our veneration upon the common ground of the credibility of human testimony.

But while we would assume the possible truth of history as a principle equally evident with the phenomena revealed by the senses, or with the general laws revealed by reason, we would by no means pretend to deny that there are difficulties peculiar to the inquiry, — difficulties which may account, in-

deed, for the distrust which many great men have harbored, although they cannot justify it.* History is founded in part upon individual testimony, and the testimony of each individual is more or less affected by circumstances peculiar to his education, habit, party alliances, preconceived opinions, and even his point of view and his mood of body or mind on the particular occasion. It is founded in part upon documents, the written records of the actors and their agents, but not always preserved in their original form, or even in any form, and, when preserved and unchanged, not always accessible. And then, when the ground has been cleared up and the facts are set forth in fulness of authentic detail, comes the ever-vexed question of principles and causes, of relative and absolute right; for, while we judge the act by its wisdom, we judge the actor by his motives.

The only just conclusion that we can draw from these considerations is the undeniable one, that the task of the historian is a task of peculiar difficulty, requiring a rare combination of moral and intellectual qualities, — patience, assiduity, discrimination, the power of dwelling thoughtfully upon simple facts, the power of rising from simple facts to general laws. He must partake freely of the poet's imagination, that he may form vivid conceptions; and of the shaping faculty of the painter, that he may give them form, life, and harmonious movement. He must share with the student of nature the capacity of calm and patient observation, and with the student of mind the habit of sober thought and rigid introspection. He must possess the faculty of detecting the relations of things by analysis, as the statesman detects them by forecast; of laying bare the secret springs of moral action, as the anatomist lays bare those of physical action. He must love Truth for her loveliness, humanity as an inheritance in which he shares. He must temper the consciousness of strength by a candid recognition of the weakness with which it is so closely allied; and must embrace in his expansive and genial sympathies the rights and claims of all whom it has pleased an all-wise and beneficent Creator to make in his own image.

* "It is not history which is treacherous, but hasty writers who are credulous and careless." — Bancroft, *Hist. U. S.*, Vol. II. p. 162, note 4.

It is equally evident that, however complete the qualifications of the historian, he will still be dependent upon the completeness of his materials for the means of displaying them. The time has gone by when the history of a nation was supposed to be confined to the lives of its kings, and when he passed for the best historian who could best paint a battle-piece or a campaign, or unravel with most skill the crooks and tangles of a tortuous policy. When the life of the state is likened to the life of the individual, it is impossible to carry out the comparison without perceiving that all the elements which enter into the study of the one are equally essential to a just comprehension of the other. As in the one we go back to the birthplace, and try to discover what influences surrounded the cradle and the nursery; to the school-room and playground, where original impulses first appear in their native colors; to early friendships and associations; to the books which were read oftenest, and the amusements that were followed up most eagerly: and then, when the life which has made him the fit subject of history has begun, as we collect every record of it, that we may study him in his letters and his sayings, in his thoughts as in his actions, till we have formed for ourselves such an image of him that we feel as if we had known him and lived with him; — so, in the other case, if we would enter into the character of an age or a nation, we must study it in all its manifestations; in the official documents which contain the record of its public life, and in the private correspondence which contains the record of the passions and opinions by which that life was fashioned and directed; in the literature which sprang from it and remains as its characteristic expression through all time, and in the literature which its daily wants called forth, and which passed away with the wants which gave it birth; in the lives and words of its great men, the representatives of its higher aims and conceptions, and in the lives and words of its little men, the representatives of its bustling activity and material inclinations, — thus leaving in our inquiries no nook or corner unsearched, lest some link should fail us in the subtle chain of cause and effect, and doing our utmost to see things as the

actors saw them, and feel as they felt, without suffering ourselves to be misled by their errors or blinded by their passions.

We have long been of the opinion, therefore, that the man who brings together and illustrates the greatest number of the materials of history is one of the most valuable contributors to a sound and healthy literature. Modest and unpretending as his labors are, they require an earnestness of purpose, a strength of will, and a patience of investigation, which, when combined with sound judgment and the power of continuous attention, may justly be considered as among the characteristics of a high order of mind. How long and earnestly must he labor in collecting his materials! How much must he read merely to find that it is not worth reading! How carefully must he distinguish between what is really trivial, and what, under its apparent triviality, contains facts or indications which, in skilful hands, may become the clew to important investigations! How cautiously must he guard himself against those false witnesses whose forgeries have so often perplexed the most skilful! How many errors of date must he rectify, and how many unacknowledged documents must he trace home to their authors! How strong must be his conviction of the importance of his labors, how warm his sympathies with humanity, and how noble the spirit which, knowing full well how little the present reward will be, finds abundant recompense in this serene intercourse with earlier days, and in the consciousness that he has left nothing undone to pay his portion of the vast debt which we all owe to the past and the future.

It was thus that Muratori built up for himself that enduring reputation which, even now, after the lapse of more than a hundred years of unexampled activity in every department of historical research, warms with filial reverence and grateful emulation the heart of every student of Italian history. It is by labors like these that the Benedictines of St. Maur have connected the name of their convent indissolubly with the history of France, and compelled the bitterest enemies of their order to regret that, in the war of extermination, a protecting hand could not have been extended to the scene of such generous and ennobling pursuits.

In our own literature two names will readily occur to every

mind as worthy to be placed at the side of those of Muratori and Dom Bouquet, — we mean, of course, Jared Sparks and Peter Force. Few men possess in an equal degree with Mr. Sparks the industry, candor, love of truth, discrimination, and sound judgment required for so difficult an undertaking as the selection and illustration of the letters and despatches of Washington. It was not the least among the traits of that wonderful man, that he seems, from the beginning of his career, which, indeed, was the beginning of his manhood, to have looked with confidence to history for the explanation and justification of his actions. He knew that his own motives would always bear the most searching scrutiny; and yet circumstances often compelled him to submit to unfounded suspicion and unmerited reproach. When assailed with a bitterness which to his high spirit must have been intensely galling, he waited in dignified silence for the justification of history. No form of slander, no virulence of vituperation, — not even that sickness of the soul which the strongest must feel, when the hand that once was clasped in friendship has been turned against him, — could draw from him a premature explanation, or induce him to engage in discussions inconsistent with the duties and the dignity of his position. But, meanwhile, all his public papers were accurately copied and filed, and the draft of every letter that went forth with his name was preserved with scrupulous care. In the first interval of repose from the absorbing duties of his military command, he suggested to Congress the propriety of having parts of his official correspondence copied for the public archives, and he superintended the execution of this work with characteristic diligence. Once only, and not till his long career was drawing to a close, did he condescend to select from the various calumnies which had been heaped upon him that which seemed to him the most difficult for any person but himself to refute, and to meet it by a clear and explicit contradiction, in a letter, not to the editor of a newspaper, but to the Secretary of State, “to be deposited in the office of the Department of State, as a testimony of the truth to the present generation and to posterity.” *

* Sparks's Washington, Vol. XI. p. 192. Among many other passages showing

A careful perusal of the Introductions of the second and third volumes of Mr. Sparks's collection will show how well he entered into Washington's views, and how admirably he was qualified for the difficult task of selection. And a more difficult task it is hard to conceive. Two hundred volumes of manuscript were to be read, and every letter carefully considered in its relations to the whole, so as to make sure that nothing should be omitted, consistently with the limits of the work, which might be needed for a thorough comprehension of the subject. Like Muratori, and the other eminent men of the class to which he belongs, he has found among his contemporaries critics as well as admirers. Some would have preferred greater fulness in parts more particularly interesting to themselves, without considering that this could be obtained only by the sacrifice of matter equally interesting to men of different tastes. Others have complained of trifling verbal alterations as bitterly as if there had been a uniform text to follow; or as if an occasional transposition, or the change of an insignificant word, amounted, at the utmost, to anything more than an error of judgment. But the far greater proportion of candid readers have recognized him as a trustworthy guide, a faithful expositor of opinions, an impartial narrator of facts, and the first to give, in the awakening of our historical studies, that direction to the public taste which has led to a juster estimate of the greatest of our great men, and a livelier interest in the most important period of our national history. If Washington is no longer spoken of as an honest man of fair talents, covering the deficiency of genius by soundness of judgment, and making up for the lack of those qualities which astonish and amaze by pre-eminence in that goodness which inspires confidence and respect; if the generalship which preserved our half-armed and half-disciplined troops through the first three perilous campaigns of an eight years' war, and

the importance Washington attached to this subject, the following is one of the most striking: "Without which" (the aid of a secretary) "the moments employed in my usual avocations, and which I have been at all leisure hours devoting to the arrangement of my voluminous public papers, civil and military, that they may go into secure deposits, and hereafter into hands that may be able to separate the grain from the chaff," &c. — Vol. XI. p. 277.

closed that war by one of the most brilliant combinations, is no longer regarded as a consequence of the happier inspirations of subordinate counsellors; if the statesmanship which formed the complicated elements of our political organization into a firm and harmonious system—meeting, not only the questions which embarrass the initial steps of every new government, but the far more perplexing questions which arose from the unsettled state of Europe, with a clearness of perception and strength of will which preserved us from fatal entanglements, and became our guide in all our subsequent intercourse with foreign nations—is acknowledged to have derived its energy, its unity, and its efficiency from the controlling influence of a vigorous and enlightened intellect; if, in short, the moral and intellectual character of Washington is more generally appreciated, more thoroughly understood, more truly the object of our veneration and pride, more constantly the ideal to whose colossal proportions we lift our eyes with grateful admiration;—it is owing, in a great measure, to the sound judgment, conscientious research, and unaffected reverence with which Mr. Sparks has selected, annotated, and expounded his writings.

Peter Force is one of those rare and happy natures that seem especially formed for the work they do, and that fill their place in life so well as to make it impossible to conceive of them in any other position than that which they occupy. Obstacles that would have damped the ardor of other men give new vigor to theirs. Incidents that would have passed unheeded in common lives become for them the occasions of decisive action. Circumstances under which the greater part of mankind would have been contented to wear their time away in a narrow round of common duties, have no power over the deep convictions of men who feel what a privilege it is to plant the seed, although they may never live to see the increase.

Peter Force was born near the Little Falls of the Passaic, in Essex County, New Jersey, on the 26th of November, 1790, the second of six children. His father, William Force, had been a soldier in the army of the Revolution, and, marrying after the close of the war, found, like too many of his com-

panions, that the return of peace brought with it a change in the form, rather than in the degree, of his exertions. The name of his mother — for we regard it as unjust to omit in the life of an eminent man the name of her to whose early care he is indebted for precious influences which time can never efface — was Sarah Ferguson. Neither of his parents lived long enough to see how closely their son was to be identified with the purest records of national glory. While he was yet an infant, his family moved to New Paltz, in Ulster County; and before he had completed his fourth year, to the city of New York. New York, although already a large and thriving city, was far from possessing the facilities which it now affords to children of every class for the acquisition of a thorough education; and a private school, of no great pretensions, was the only place where the young historian could lay the foundation of those studies which were to be the charm and solace of his life. Unfortunately, the teacher failed to discern the richness of the material that had been intrusted to his care; and the discontented pupil, taking his destiny into his own hands, quitted the school, and engaged himself to learn the art of printing in the office of W. A. Davis. Before he was sixteen, he was sole director of the office. Here, in the midst of Dutch associations, — for the office was situated in Bloomingdale, — he worked with great zest upon the second edition of Knickerbocker's New York. In one of the chapters Irving had inserted, somewhat perhaps at a venture, a few family names of genuine Dutch euphony, to fill up his picture, — very much, indeed, as a painter throws in an additional figure, or a tree or two, to complete the harmony of his composition. The young printer, whose historical instincts were already working within him, thought that the verisimilitude might be heightened by adding one or two local names; and accordingly, inserting them in the text, he sent the proof to the author. Mr. Irving, upon whom a good thing was never lost, wrote his approval on the margin, and they all have in every subsequent edition kept their place in sonorous dignity. It was not till many years afterward, and when far advanced in his *Life of Washington*, that Mr. Irving learnt that the guide on whom he had reposed so

confidently during a portion of his labors in real history was the journeyman printer who had entered so heartily into the humor of his imaginary annals.

Meanwhile the direction which his teacher had failed to give to his studies was given to them by the evening circle that collected around his father's fireside. His father, as we have already said, had been a soldier of the Revolution; and when he established himself in New York, his house became a favorite gathering-place for his former companions in arms. The conversation of these old soldiers naturally turned upon the scenes in which they had been so long engaged; and many a striking incident, many a characteristic deed, many an adventure unknown to the professed historian, was repeated with all the minuteness of personal recollection, in the long winter evenings, and while the memory of the actors was still fresh. "Why," said the thoughtful boy, as he listened to the thrilling narrative, "why should things like these be forgotten?" And he resolved to write them in a book, and call it the "Unwritten History of the War in New Jersey." It was a labor of love, filling up every leisure hour, and training him for those habits of personal investigation and cautious study of tradition which have proved so useful to him in his subsequent career. But this mental discipline and this gratification of his taste were the only fruit that he reaped from his labors; for the manuscript was lost when the work was nearly completed.

The war of 1812 found him advanced in his profession, President of the Typographical Society, and more interested than ever in his historical studies. Still he did not forget that he was the son of a soldier; and entering, as a volunteer, General Ebenezer Stevens's division of detached militia, he served through two campaigns of three months each, first as a private, then, from the 6th of May, 1812, as sergeant, and in the following year as sergeant-major. The service, it is true, was not severe, the first three months' duty having been passed at the Narrows, and the second in the city; but if "the campaign of the Hampshire grenadiers was not useless to the historian of the Roman Empire," neither were the practical lessons of the hundred and fifteenth regiment of the tenth brigade of in-

fantry lost upon the future author of the American Archives. One of the greatest difficulties of the mere author lies in forming, not lively, — for imagination will give that, — but accurate conceptions of things he has never seen; and there are few historians who would not write a better narrative of a campaign after a month in the field, or see more clearly into the workings of political machinery after an active participation in Parliament or Congress. The forms of office are a burden, and routine weakens the mind and contracts it; but there is a certain knowledge of them which is essential in order to enable us to give them their due place; and hardly preferable to the ignorance which despises any of the elements of social organization, is that undue reverence which the most candid are the most apt to feel for whatever comes to them with the indistinctness of mystery.

It would be an error, however, to attribute Mr. Force's entrance into active life solely to his desire of fitting himself for the interpretation of history. A vigorous frame, an active temperament, a quick perception of character, a keen appreciation of humor, and a rare strength of purpose and energy of will, made the study of human nature, and that kind of excitement which is found in acting with men and upon them, a pleasure in itself. And the same inward admonition that led him when a boy of ten to abandon the school at which he was not learning what he knew he wanted, for a printing-office in which labor was to lead to independence, kept him through all his active years, and in the midst of engrossing cares, keenly alive to the duties of an American citizen. In 1815 he received from the Governor of the State an appointment as ensign, and in 1816 as lieutenant. Here ends his career as a citizen of New York; for in 1816 he removed to Washington, under an arrangement with Mr. Davis, who had obtained the contract for the printing of Congress.

In this new field he soon became known as a public-spirited, just-minded, industrious citizen, who had the welfare of the community at heart, and the honest ambition to do his duty as a member of a commonwealth fully entitled to the best services of all her children. Continuing his military career, he was commissioned by the President of the United States

on the 21st of September, 1824, as Captain of Artillery in the Washington Militia; on the 26th of February, 1830, as Lieutenant-Colonel of the Militia of the District of Columbia; on the 23d of December, 1840, as Colonel of Artillery, and in May, 1860, as Major-General in the same body;—offices of which he scrupulously fulfilled the duties, setting an example, during a life filled with other labors and checkered by many cares, of what the American citizen owes to the military system of his country.

In civil life his services were more laborious. In June, 1822, he entered the City Council as Councilman, was soon chosen President, and, when his term of service expired, was re-elected during his absence. After several years' service in the Council, he was raised to the second branch of the municipal assembly, as Alderman; was President of this board also; and closed his municipal career by presiding over the city government as Mayor from 1836 to 1840. Unwilling to withhold the services due from a good citizen, he has since accepted a place not free from a labor and responsibility severe for a man of his years, as one of the Inspectors of the Penitentiary; and he still continues to perform the duties of that office with punctual assiduity.

We have entered into these details of his official career, not merely because they serve to illustrate his character, but because we love, as citizens of a republic, to dwell upon this picture of a life in which public and private duties are so harmoniously blended; and we feel that if all, and more especially those of us who make the engrossing nature of our individual pursuits a pretext for refusing to bear a part of the responsibilities of freemen, were to ponder it well, we should become better citizens, and should render our country itself still more deserving of our love.

More directly in harmony with his historical pursuits was the publication of the *National Calendar and Annals of the United States*, a work full of important material for the history of the organization of the central government, and of the material progress of the country year by year, and which was continued annually from 1820 through 1836. In 1823 he established the *National Journal*, in which he advocated the

election, and subsequently supported the administration of Mr. Adams, but in a style partaking rather of the candor of the historian than of the injustice of the political partisan. Indeed, we have heard it said, that on one occasion his party were so dissatisfied with the manner in which he had narrated an incident that told somewhat more favorably than they would have wished, for the opposite side, that some of the leading members met and resolved to propose to him to accept the assistance of a committee for the political columns of his paper. Not willing, however, to express their wishes openly, they sent a member to him beforehand to sound him about it. "I do not suppose any gentleman would make such a proposition to me," was the answer; and the upright man, who could not see why the truth should be concealed because it did honor to an adversary, was left to pursue his own way.

Meanwhile his great conception — the American Archives — was growing and maturing in his mind, gradually assuming form and substance and definite proportions. The germ lay in his "Unwritten History of the War in New Jersey"; for, as in all vigorous and original minds, the seed bore but a faint proportion to the fruit; and it is only when we look up to the broad branches of the oak that we can realize what a gigantic growth lay hidden in the tiny shell of the acorn. Revolving in his thought the legendary history of the Revolution, as he had received it from the lips of subordinate actors, he felt that the story as told thus far had lost half of its power by losing half of its reality. While listening to a narrative of what the narrator himself had seen and done, and what most of the listeners had seen and done with him, he felt that in history there is a kind of knowledge which can be obtained only by looking, as it were, with the eyes of contemporaries, seeing things as they saw them while the result was still uncertain, and feeling as they felt while the decision was still to be made. The truest history, therefore, would be a literal reproduction of the past discussions, doubts, resolves, the acts of assemblies, the movements of the people, rumors gradually settling into facts, characters unfolding and taking their definite form, and events shaping themselves by degrees in accordance with that universal law which, from the most varied and apparently

disconnected elements, evolves an all-pervading unity of growth and design. To obtain this, he felt that it was necessary to let the past tell its own story, and, as far as those ideas which underlie all great events had been definitely expressed, to give them in the words in which they were first uttered. Three elements appear in the history of the Revolution, or rather three classes of actors, — sometimes distinct, sometimes acting in unison, but always moving from the same point, and intending to move in the same direction, — public assemblies, the army, and the people. The public assemblies were, in England, the two Houses of Parliament; in America, Congress, and the Provincial Assemblies, under their various names; and the record of their discussions and acts forms a vital portion of the history of the period. The story of the army is contained in the reports and correspondence of the officers, and in the private letters both of officers and privates. The people expressed a part of their opinions at the polls, a part in occasional letters, a part by the greater or less readiness with which they complied with the requisitions of their representatives; and the residue is to be derived from pamphlets and the public press. Going back, therefore, and arranging these various materials, each in its proper order and place, day by day, month by month, year by year, we should truly reproduce the past, and put it in the power of every reader to live through these events as if he had been an actor in them.

It was in 1820 that the outlines of this plan first occurred to his mind, and two years of meditation and study were devoted to them before he could bring them into a satisfactory shape. A specimen of the work — the History of the Stamp Act — was published in the Calendar for 1832, for the purpose of explaining the plan of the proposed publication; and in the same year the subject was brought before Congress. We do not propose to enter into the history of the discussion to which it gave rise, the opposition it encountered, or the arguments that were employed to render it acceptable. For our present purpose it is sufficient to say that a majority was found of men who looked upon the history of their country as a solemn trust, the actions of her great men as a precious legacy, and

the duty of legislators as extending to everything that can elevate a nation's character, and secure for it the pride, the respect, and the affection of its citizens. The Secretary of State was Mr. Livingston, a man who had borne too large a part in the making of history not to feel its value. Still, when the plan was first laid before him, he received it coldly, simply promising to take it into consideration. Confident that if examined it could not but commend itself to the approval of so intelligent a man, Mr. Force let a whole fortnight pass before he returned to the Department. The moment that he entered, he was told that the Secretary wished to see him; and after a conversation of two hours, in which the subject was discussed in all its bearings and from every point of view, he had the satisfaction to be assured of the full approval and hearty concurrence of that eminent statesman.

Before the publication began, Mr. Livingston was sent to France, and the Department of State passed into the hands of Mr. Forsyth, who, in the Senate, had been one of the warmest opponents of the work, going so far, even, as to propose stopping it, though in favor of making a compensation for the expenses already incurred in its preparation. "I opposed you in the Senate, sir," he said on his first official interview, "and I still think you would have done best to accept my proposition." "I think not," answered the author, with that firm tone of conviction which shakes the faith even of the most persistent. "Well, sir," resumed the new Secretary, "it is now my duty, as head of this Department, to examine the subject anew. Have the goodness to leave me your papers." "I have examined them," was his salutation at their next meeting; "it is a noble enterprise. What can I do to help you? Would you not like to have copies from the English archives? If you would, I will request our Minister to apply for them immediately." And so he did; and although the application was unsuccessful, (for the English government had not yet thrown open its documentary treasures as liberally as it has since done to every candid inquirer,) he continued to the last to give all the weight of his official and personal influence to what he had learned to look upon as one of the noblest monuments of the administration with whose history his own name was to be connected.

No sooner was his contract with government completed, than Mr. Force commenced his studies in the public offices of the original thirteen States, from New Hampshire to Georgia. He had desired to begin with the fourth series, or the history of the Revolution, as that for which he was best prepared. Examining the files and letter-books, he had copies made of everything that bore upon his subject, reserving the decision as to what should be left out to the time when he could make it with all his documents before him. "But do you want all this?" he was frequently asked at the different State Capitols, when he had laid out to be copied some large pile, with papers in it of apparently little interest. "Yes, all, — for if I omit any, when I get home the paper that I omit may be the very one that I need to fix a date or decide upon a name. Copy all." At Washington a room was assigned him in the Department of State, in which his copyists could work without fear of interruption or delay. Private collections were thrown open to his inspection, and as he became known as a collector, books and manuscripts were sent to him from all parts of the country. And soon he had spread a net-work from the Gulf of Mexico to the St. Lawrence, correspondents in every town, agents in every State, copyists in every office, all receiving their impulse from his will, and guided by his instructions. His copyists were required to follow their text literally, preserving not only the errors of orthography and grammar, but even those slips of the pen which the most careful cannot always guard against. Aiming thus, throughout, at completeness and accuracy, sparing no pains, hesitating at no expense, and shrinking from no labor, he formed for himself a collection of materials that went as nigh as documents can go to making him a contemporary of the events he had undertaken to record.

Mr. Force still preserves unchanged, in the smallest room of his library, the little recess which first served him for a book-case, — a narrow opening in the wall, in which some fifty volumes or more might be pressed together, but which, as it slowly filled up, seemed to him like the gradual fulfilment of long-cherished hopes. It would be pleasant and instructive to tell how those few volumes grew up into a vast collection of

forty thousand books and manuscripts, covering the whole field of American history. But this would be foreign to our present purpose. One of the incidental consequences of this library has been the republication — at intervals — of four volumes of tracts and pamphlets relative to American history, which had become so rare as to put them out of the reach of a great proportion of those most interested in them.

At length, in December, 1838, appeared the first volume of the Archives, beginning with the debates in Parliament upon the King's message of the 7th of March, 1774, and coming down to the prorogation of the 26th of May, 1775. A second volume followed in October, 1839; a third, in December, 1840; and by January, 1853, he had covered the whole period from 1774 to the end of 1776 in nine closely printed folios. The materials of the tenth volume were selected and arranged seven years ago; but owing to the neglect or refusal of the present Secretary of State and his predecessor (to which officer a right of supervision is reserved by the contract) to authorize the continuance of the work, no further progress has been made in the publication. Why the student of our history should have been thus deprived of his best guide, and our literature of such a monument as was never before raised by one man to the glory of his country, we shall not now inquire. But, as Americans, proud of our birthright, taught to look upon it as the greatest of privileges to call ourselves the fellow-citizens of Washington, trained in grateful reverence for the men whose genius, whose fortitude, whose self-denial, and whose blood, freely spilt on many fields, won for us the blessings of independence, and made us an example and a watchword to the nations, we feel that in the arbitrary interruption of the American Archives a great wrong has been done to us, to our children, and to the memory of our fathers.

The "Diary of the Revolution" belongs to the same class with the works of which we have been speaking, and it is not saying too much of it to say that the editor has proved himself worthy to walk in the footsteps of his illustrious guides. Mr. Moore began his labors as an illustrator of history by a publication entitled "Ballads of the Revolution"; a volume

of much curious research, displaying sagacity and industry in rare degree, and adding largely to our knowledge of this characteristic portion of our history. Encouraged by the success of his first attempt, he published in 1857 a work of greater compass and difficulty, entitled "American Eloquence, a Collection of Speeches and Addresses by the most eminent Orators of America, with Biographical Sketches and Illustrative Notes," — not a mere repetition of other compilations, but a work of original research, containing much rare matter, selected, arranged, and illustrated with industry and judgment. The biographical sketches are in themselves an important contribution to this interesting department of our literature, and with the notes, drawn from a wide range of reading and inquiry, they afford abundant means for a correct understanding of the text.

The line of research in which he had thus become engaged carried him deeper than any one but Mr. Force had ever gone into the newspaper literature of the Revolution, — a field so rich, so characteristic, and so little known, that he resolved to make it the subject of a special study. The result is now before us, in two octavo volumes. The chief sources from which he has drawn are the newspapers of both sides, Tory as well as Whig, from the 1st of January, 1775, to the 31st of December, 1781, illustrated by extracts from private letters and diaries. The difficulty lay in making such a selection as to give the true spirit and character of the daily press as the expression of public opinion and belief; for it is less as a record of what was true, than as a record of what men believed, or knew that they could make others believe, that we go back to the papers of an historical age. The rumor of to-day may be contradicted by the rumor of to-morrow, and both may prove in the end to have been equally false. But the invention will always be adapted to the expectations of the reader; and the coloring will be borrowed from the prevailing passions and prejudices of the epoch. Like memoirs, newspapers present opinions in their reality, even where they err in giving facts; and they thus contain in their grossest distortions a description of truth, without which we can no more paint an age, than we can paint a landscape without atmosphere, or a portrait without shade.

Mr. Moore's selections, if we consider them from this point of view, are eminently judicious. We find elaborate essays, — the *leaders* of our modern journals; letters, — brief it is true, when compared with the "correspondence" of the present day, but fresh with the life and spirit of the times; news, with its characteristic coloring; reports, characters, satires, squibs, and every now and then a stirring appeal upon some topic of especial interest; and the whole so characteristic, and so full of the peculiar spirit of the age, that you feel on reading them as if you had obtained a new view of it, and had been admitted to a more familiar intercourse with the great body of the people.

The newspaper of the Revolution bears very much the same relation to the newspaper of the present day, that the thirteen States which declared themselves independent of Great Britain bear to the thirty-three States which look upon Great Britain as a storehouse and market. Let us take for example a journal of the great city, the seat of Congress, the centre of the political struggles and intrigues, toward which all eyes were turned from every corner of the Confederation, — "The Pennsylvania Evening Post," printed on very brown paper, with very indifferent ink, for three dollars a month. The number upon our table is No. 649, Saturday, February 12, 1780. It is a single sheet, thirteen inches and a half long, with three inches and a quarter of lower and two inches of upper margin. Its width is eight inches and a half, two of which are margin. The printed matter is arranged in two columns of about sixty lines each, averaging perhaps nine and a half words to a line. The first column contains a copy of a remarkable inscription. The next four and a quarter are a continuation of a reprint from the Parliamentary Register of the correspondence between "the *infatuated* ministry of the king of Great Britain and the commanders-in-chief in America," from the siege of Boston to the evacuation of Philadelphia. The remainder is devoted to news, partly in the form of extracts from letters from Fish-kill, Philadelphia, Charleston, Baltimore, Boston, and Poughkeepsie. The "General Advertiser" of the same city comes somewhat nearer the proportions of our smaller country papers, being two inches longer, three wider, with less margin, and

containing three columns to a page, five columns being filled with advertisements.

Still, if you look closely, you will find the spirit of their age in these papers, — that firm, manly, energetic spirit which we love to call the spirit of seventy-six. Read that little paragraph under the date of “Fishkill, Feb. 3. — The sound between Connecticut and Long Island is almost froze over in the widest parts, and some persons have passed over from Long Island to Norwalk and other parts of Connecticut upon the ice. Wood is brought from Long Island to New York on sleighs. It is also passable from Paulus Hook to New York.” Now remember who held New York and Long Island; remember the sack of New Haven, the burning of Fairfield, Greenwich, and Norwalk but six months before; remember, too, how gallantly “Light-horse Harry” had avenged them, dashing into Paulus Hook on the night of the 19th of July and carrying off 159 prisoners “within cannon-shot of the enemy.” Then fancy yourself an inhabitant of some distant village, where the mail comes but once a week, and out of the line of expressmen. How eagerly you will read that paragraph! what a knot of anxious listeners will gather round you! what speculations, what fears, what hopes will be awakened by the little dingy sheet, which tells of this firm pathway of ice, and winter but two thirds over, between the authors and the sufferers of such bitter wrongs, — so many spirits thirsting for glory, so many hearts burning for revenge!

It must, however, be borne in mind, that a part, and indeed a large part, of what is now done by the press was done, in the time of the Revolution, by the pulpit. When it took a party of officers, anxious to reach their journey’s end, three weeks to go four hundred and ten miles,* it was hardly possible for a daily paper to make its way far into the interior. Events, of course, were known through the papers, or private letters, or special messengers; but opinions came from those weekly monitors to whom a devout and church-going people looked up with traditional reverence. They were the initiators and guides of thought, moulding the opinions of their flock by vigorous logic and fervent exhortation, and boldly applying the lessons of Scripture to the events of the day. They never

* Duponceau’s Memoirs, in Kapp’s Steuben, Chap. V.

doubted their obligation to tell all that they felt as patriots, as much as all that they felt as Christians. Duty to their country seemed to them a part of their duty to the God who had given them their country; and in their love of liberty, they never doubted that the possession of it in spiritual things imposed upon them the duty of preserving it in temporal things. They resisted every encroachment upon their political rights, as but the forerunner of an encroachment upon their religious rights; and they studied their Bible for their lessons of civil wisdom, as well as for their lessons in theology. The village church was a school of deep and earnest thought, where men met to hear what concerned them most in this life and in the next, and grew strong in purpose and in will as they listened to teachings that they revered from a voice that they loved.

But the great occasions were the thanksgiving-days and the fast-days proclaimed by public authority and reverently observed. For these the preacher prepared himself with more than usual care, and his people listened to him with more than their wonted devotion. The text was selected from some passage of Scripture easily applied to the circumstances which had called forth this solemn expression of public feeling, and the analogies were brought out in their most striking colors. "Our soul is escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken and we are escaped; our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth,"—was the text with which Jonathan Mayhew opened his Thanksgiving sermon upon the repeal of the Stamp Act. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy,"—furnished John Hurt with the starting-point for a fervid appeal to the "love of country"; and, dedicating his sermon to the soldiers before whom it was preached, he says: "For after all the definitions of patriotism that ever were or ever will be given, this is the quintessence of it, 'The opposing ourselves foremost in the field of battle against the enemies of our country.'"*

* We would, in this connection, commend to our readers a volume recently published in New York, under the title of "Patriot Preachers of the American Revolution," containing thirteen sermons;—a work of much interest to every one who would enter into the real spirit of those days.

When the service was over, the people would linger in groups around the church door, or under the shade of the trees which stretched their broad arms over the graves of kindred and friends in the churchyard, and talk over what they had heard. Here is a group of elders, men who remember the "old French war," and Indian frays, and how the Colonists had fought where the "regulars" ran. There is a band of young men, who feel their blood running warmer in their veins for the words they have been listening to, and are right glad to be assured, by one to whom they have been taught to look up with confidence, that their longing to fight for their country is a righteous longing, and acceptable in the sight of God. And the women look earnestly on and listen; — mothers, who remember with heavy hearts why some of the graves around them were prematurely opened; wives, who read a fearful warning of long days and nights of anxious separation in the contracted brows and firm-set lips of those who never seemed so dear or so necessary to them before; and maidens, too full of life and hope to think that anything but triumph and glory can be in store for the champions of a cause which God himself has blessed by the mouth of his faithful minister. Here, too, the latest news from the army was told, — a letter from camp, perhaps, filled with familiar names, drawn forth from the pocket of some exulting father, and passed from hand to hand. It was in scenes like these that the story of Trenton found new recruits for the camp of Morristown, and that imaginations kindled by the desperate daring of Stony Point gave new impulse to that last great movement which filled up the ranks for Eutaw and Yorktown. Then, as friend exchanged thoughts with friend, and found his own sentiments reflected in those of one whom he had been accustomed to trust, and as doubts, too, were uttered, and vanished in the uttering, the preacher — the man who had received them when, in infancy, their parents gave them up to the Lord, who had prayed with them at the death-bed, and spoken words of soothing trust when the grave was closed over their dear ones — would pass from group to group, with cordial clasp-

ings of hand, and seek in their approving faces the confirmation of what he had said to them from the pulpit. And the elders, standing apart in authoritative council, would say that the truths spoken that morning must not be lost to the world, but must go forth in print to inspire and strengthen others, as they had inspired and strengthened them. Thus sermons became the text-books of popular discussion, and pamphlets for the teaching of thousands beyond the reach of the voice that had first pronounced them.

Among the editors of those days there are several of whom we would gladly speak more fully, if Mr. Moore had not given us, in his Preface, something like a promise of a "history of the periodical press of the last century,"—a promise which we trust he will promptly fulfil, and which will afford us an opportunity of returning again to this fruitful subject. Meanwhile, we feel that nothing which we can say can give so lively an impression of the value and importance of these volumes as the following extracts, taken almost at a venture from their pages :—

1775. "A letter in Messrs. Mill's and Hick's paper,* signed, 'A Son of New England,' appears to be the produce of a distempered brain, which, like many others in Boston and the neighboring towns, are raving after liberty; a word they have
New England.
got by rote like a parrot, without knowing the meaning of it; and when Massachusettensis,† or any other unprejudiced writer, endeavors to make them sensible of their error, and clearly prove it is not liberty but licentiousness they are running after, they immediately fly into abuse, calling them the enemies of their country, not considering that they themselves, the imaginary supporters of liberty, are the real enemies of this country, by spiring up the people, by every delusive method, to forfeit everything that is dear to them in this world, and to merit the curses of their children from generation to generation.

"It is to be hoped that there are very few who think that the fate of Britain depends on the liberties of America, or that the mother country will ever suffer the Colonies to dictate to her. She has been long tender of the rod, but be assured the time approaches when she will exercise it with severity, and show the stubborn sons of New England

* The Boston Weekly Advertiser of Jan. 30.

† Daniel Leonard, of Taunton, Mass., author of a series of articles under that signature.

that she will not any longer bear with their degenerate behavior. If every man had thought for himself, and not been led by the nose by a Cooper * or an Adams, † all might have been happy ; but these inconsiderate people have made themselves idols, viz. liberty trees, newspapers, and congresses, which by blindly worshipping have so engrossed their minds, that they give not the least attention to their several occupations, but attend at taverns, where they talk politics, get drunk, damn king, ministers, and taxes, and vow they will follow any measures proposed to them by their demagogues, however repugnant to religion, reason, and common sense.

“ It is a remark that the high sons of liberty consist but of two sorts of men. The first are those who by their debaucheries and ill conduct in life are reduced almost to poverty, and are happy in finding a subsistence, though it is even on the destruction of their country ; for on the turbulence of the times, and the heated imaginations of the population, depends their existence. The latter are the ministers of the gospel, who, instead of preaching to their flocks meekness, sobriety, attention to their different employments, and a steady obedience to the laws of Britain, belch from the pulpit liberty, independence, and a steady perseverance in endeavoring to shake off their allegiance to the mother country. The independent ministers have ever been, since the first settling of this Colony, the instigators and abettors of every persecution and conspiracy. ‡ ”

1775. “ Yesterday morning, according to orders issued the day before by Major-General Putnam, all the Continental troops under his immediate command assembled on Prospect Hill, when the declaration of the Continental Congress was read, after which an animated and pathetic address to the army was made by the Reverend Mr. Leonard, chaplain to General Putnam’s regiment, and succeeded by a pertinent prayer ; when General Putnam gave the signal, and the whole army shouted their loud amen by three cheers ; upon which a cannon was fired from the fort, and the standard lately sent to General Putnam was exhibited, flourishing in the air, bearing on one side this motto, AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN, and on the other side, QUI TRANSTULIT SUSTINET. The whole was conducted with the utmost decency, good order, and regularity, and to the universal acceptance of all present. And

* William Cooper, town-clerk of Boston.

† Samuel Adams.

‡ Rivington’s Gazette, March 9. — This piece was published with the following note : “ Mr. Rivington : Sir, — By inserting the following letter in your paper, which was refused admittance in a paper in Boston, you will much oblige your humble servant, *Belisarius*. ”

the PHILISTINES on Bunker's Hill heard the shout of the ISRAELITES, and, being very fearful, paraded themselves in battle array."

1775. "This evening was married, at the seat of Thaddeus Burr, Esq., at Fairfield, Connecticut, by the Reverend Mr. Elliot, the Hon. John Hancock, Esq., President of the Continental Congress, to Miss Dorothy Quincy, daughter of Edmund Quincy, Esq., of Boston. Florus informs us, that 'in the second Punic war, when Hannibal besieged Rome and was very near making himself master of it, a field upon which part of his army lay was offered for sale, and was immediately purchased by a Roman, in a strong assurance that the Roman valor and courage would soon raise the siege.' Equal to the conduct of that illustrious citizen was the marriage of the Honorable John Hancock, Esq., who, with his amiable lady, has paid as great a compliment to *American* valor, and discovered equal patriotism, by marrying now while all the Colonies are as much convulsed as Rome when Hannibal was at her gates.* "

1776. "Mr. Washington is just such another character as my Lord Essex, the Parliament's general in King Charles the First's time. Putnam may very well be compared to Ireton. Hancock is one of the greatest desperadoes living. Adams Letter of a Virginian. generally sleeps with the memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz under his pillow. The slow and lenient measures of the British Government have been interpreted by our rulers into fear. We poor, distressed Americans make a fine joke of your pity. Do not imagine we desire peace, even upon those terms we seem to solicit it. Were you to agree to those terms, behold some new demands, without satisfaction for which we cannot think of laying down our arms. The king must dismiss and punish those servants who have so highly offended us. After King Charles had granted the Rebel Parliament all they could ask, for want of a better pretence, they declared they could not trust him, and so began the Civil War. Let somebody remember, that the Congress has amused you with proposals of accommodation, merely to gain time; it has answered their end, and they were tolerably well prepared by the latter end of the summer. This winter some of their grand schemes are to be put in execution. They have had amazing success; for all Canada is in their hands already. The Canadians have used General Carleton extremely ill. Montreal was taken almost without a blow. Troops are now marching for Nova Scotia, and you may expect to hear of the surrender of Halifax some time in February. The Amer-

* New York Gazette, September 4.

ican cruisers have had as good luck with your transports; indeed, the country is so well provided for defence, that every town looks like a storehouse, filled with all kinds of warlike necessaries. All people, both high and low, seem as unanimous, as easy, and composed, as if engaged in the most safe and justifiable undertaking in the world.*"

1777. "JANUARY 25.—THE following Proclamation was this day published by the Lord Protector, Mr. George Washington:—

"Whereas several persons, inhabitants of the United States of America, influenced by inimical motives, intimidated by the threats of the enemy, Washington's or deluded by a proclamation issued the 30th of November Proclamation. last, by Lord and General Howe, styled the King's Commissioners for granting pardons, &c., (now at open war, and invading these States,) have been so lost to the interest and welfare of their country as to repair to the enemy, sign a declaration of fidelity, and in some instances have been compelled to take the oaths of allegiance, and engage not to take up arms, or encourage others so to do, against the King of Great Britain: And whereas it has become necessary to distinguish between the friends of America and those of Great Britain, inhabitants of these States, and that every man who receives protection from, and is a subject of any State, (not being conscientiously scrupulous against bearing arms,) should stand ready to defend the same against hostile invasion: I do, therefore, in behalf of the United States, by virtue of the powers committed to me by Congress, hereby strictly command and require every person, having subscribed such declaration, taken such oaths, and accepted such protection and certificate, to repair to head-quarters, or to the quarters of the nearest general officer of the Continental army or militia, (until further provision can be made by civil authority,) and there deliver up such protection, certificate, and passports, and take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America; nevertheless, hereby granting full liberty to all such as prefer the interest and protection of Great Britain to the freedom and happiness of their country, forthwith to withdraw themselves and families within the enemy's lines. And I do hereby declare, that all and every person who may neglect or refuse to comply with this order, within thirty days from the date hereof, will be deemed adherents to the King of Great Britain, and treated as common enemies of these American States.'

"T is hardly possible to read over this miserable Proclamation without pity and astonishment. That Mr. Washington, who *once* was

* Letter from "A Virginian," to the editor of the Middlesex Journal, published in that paper, January 23.

esteemed a gentleman, should forfeit that character by becoming the tool of an impracticable ambition, is a matter of commiseration; but, that he should be so contaminated by the vice of his associates as to lose all regard to the common forms of morality, all dignity of sentiment, and decency of conduct, was not to have been expected from a man who owned the least pride, or felt the least consciousness of virtue. His desperate situation may be his apology, but it cannot be his excuse. He might have been mistaken in respect to his notions of civil polity; but he could not have been deceived in those actions and ideas of moral turpitude, which is the disgrace of human nature. 'T is an old and true observation, *Magistratus indicat Virum*, 'the Ruler shows the Man'; and we have now nothing more to learn of this famous Mr. Washington.

"He has the boldness to declare, that there are 'some instances' of persons who 'have been compelled to take the oath of allegiance.' This is an absolute falsehood in fact, and he knew it was a falsehood; he knew such conduct was repugnant to the genius and spirit of the British nation, or he would have produced one instance to confirm his assertion. The bravery of Britons, which sooner or later will make him tremble, disdains any but voluntary professions of allegiance, and, above all things, despises the dastardly subterfuges of falsehood and slander.

"The next material circumstance in this Proclamation is sufficient to make an honest man shudder. It may be styled, a Proclamation for the encouragement of Perjury. Mr. Washington 'strictly commands and requires every person,' who has taken a solemn oath of Allegiance to the King, and called God to witness the truth and sincerity of it, to repair to him or his officers, and take another solemn oath, and call God to witness the sincerity and truth of his adherence to the cause of rebellion. Such an impious disregard, such a flagrant violation of all that is serious and sacred among men, has rarely been seen in any age, country, or profession.

"For the honor of human nature, it may be said, that it was left for rebels to their King and destroyers of their country, to give a public sanction to *Wilful Perjury*.

"'T is no wonder that a principle of this kind should be attended with a suitable practice. Mr. Washington grants by this proclamation 'full liberty' to all such as prefer the protection of Great Britain to his own, 'forthwith to withdraw themselves and families within the enemy's lines.' This is only a trap to discover those who are not affected to the rebellion; and even this mean idea has been followed by a conduct of which a common Turk would have been ashamed.

Doctor Brown, of Newark, in the Jerseys, relying not merely upon Mr. Washington's word as a gentleman, but upon his public faith pledged in the foregoing paper as a public man, immediately wrote to him, desiring leave to withdraw himself and family to New York, pursuant to his proclamation. Instead of complying with the Doctor's wishes, he sent a party of his rebels to drag him away to Morristown. He is now confined there in jail, his family is almost distracted, and all his property seized. So much for the public faith of Mr. Washington !

"He seems indebted for the last cruel idea of his proclamation to the worthy author of 'Common Sense,' and the 'American Crisis.' This gentleman is for seizing all the property of people who refuse to join in his measures, for the sake of the spoil ; and has the confidence to declare, that such a seizure would enable his rebellious adherents to carry on the war for two years longer. 'T is to be hoped, for the honor and safety of America, that the good people of this country will give an exact account of him and some of his associates in half the time. It is every man's interest, who has anything to lose, to take care of a person who has the impudence to profess himself a public robber and destroyer, and then can call this unheard of cruelty and devastation by the name of 'soft resentment.' However, if men who can encourage perjury by proclamation, and plunge thousands of families into irretrievable ruin, only for the purpose of answering dark ambition ; if men who can have the consummate boldness to break their public faith, and, calling the gentle government of Britain tyranny, can become the most insolent and outrageous tyrants themselves ; if such can possibly arrive at the rule of this once happy country, it will be the interest of every one who loves the enjoyment of liberty more than the sound, to retire from America as speedily as he can. In such an event, (which, however, is not likely to happen,) he would escape the anarchy, riot, and bloodshed, which these 'unprincipled impostors' sooner or later would spread over the land, and which would then become the vengeance of Providence itself on this most ungrateful and unnatural rebellion.*"

* New York Gazette, February 10.